CLAIMS:

1.   A method for driving multiple applications (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) by a common dialog management system (1) where a unique set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) is assigned to each application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n), and where the common dialog management system (1) informs a user () of the status of an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) by playback, at a specific point in a dialog flow, of a relevant auditory icon (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) selected from the unique set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) of the respective application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n).

2.   A method according claim 1, where the auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) of an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) are played back to indicate to the user a change in operational status of an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n).

3.   A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, where an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) submits a set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) and associated instructions concerning the use thereof to the dialog management system (1).

4.   A method according to claim 3, where identifying information for the individual auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) of an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) and associated instructions are obtained by the dialog management system (1), and the auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) are retrieved by the dialog management system (1), from the application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) upon request.

5.   A method according to claim 3, where the complete set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) of an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) is acquired by the dialog management system (1) at the outset of a dialog flow between the user and the application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) or upon activation or installation of the application (A_1,

A_2, A_3, ..., A_n).

6.   A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the dialog management system (1) supplies an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) with a unique set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n), by modifying non-unique auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) in a set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) of the application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) and/or choosing unique auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) for the application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) from a collection (13) of auditory icons.

7.   A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) for playback in a dialog flow between a user and an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) comprises at least one unique start auditory icon, for playback at commencement of the dialog flow and/or at least one unique end auditory icon, for playback at conclusion of a dialog flow.

8.   A method according to any of the preceding claims, where the set of auditory icons (S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n) for playback in a dialog flow between a user and an application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n) comprises a number of unique informative auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n), for playback at specific points during the dialog flow where each auditory icon (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) describes a particular type of feedback from the application (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n).

9.   A method according to any of the preceding claims, where auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) and/or playback characteristics of the auditory icons (I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n) are specified for a user in a user profile (3).

10.   A dialog management system (1) for driving a number of applications (A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n), comprising

-        an input detection arrangement (4) for detecting user input (5) to the system;

-        a sound output arrangement (6) for outputting audible prompt (7) ;

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- a core dialog engine (8) for coordinating a dialog flow by interpreting user input (5) and generating output prompts ();

- an application interface (10) for communication between the dialog management system (1) and the applications $(A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n)$;

- a source of unique sets of auditory icons $(S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n)$ assigned to the applications $(A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n)$;

- and an auditory icon management unit (11) for selecting relevant auditory icons $(I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n)$ from the unique sets of auditory icons $(S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n)$ corresponding to the applications $(A_1, A_2, A_3, ..., A_n)$ for playback at specific points in the dialog flow.

11.   A dialog management system (1) according to claim 11, comprising a means (15) for allowing the user to input auditory icons $(I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n)$.

12.   A dialog management system (1) according to claim 11 or claim 12, comprising an interface (14) for obtaining sets of auditory icons $(S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n)$ or individual auditory icons $(I_1, I_2, I_3, ..., I_n)$ from an external source (12)

13.   A computer program product directly loadable into the memory of a programmable dialog management system (1) comprising software code portions for performing the steps of a method according to claims 1 to 10 when said product is run on the dialog management system (1).